

Illinois Green Ribbon Schools Application

Response ID: 235 Date

1. Page One

Thank you for your interest in completing the Illinois Green Ribbon Schools application. In order to complete this application, you will need to collect extensive data about your school's facility, health and safety policies, food service, and environmental and sustainability curriculum and assessment. The application guide is provided to help you prepare your application. We strongly encourage you to use it to begin your research. Applications must be submitted electronically, via this survey, to ISBE no later than February 15, 2012.

The U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools (ED-GRS) award is intended to recognize those schools taking a comprehensive approach to greening their school. A comprehensive approach incorporates and integrates environmental learning with maximizing positive environmental and health impacts. The award criteria are intended to focus on measurable outcomes wherever possible.

This is a two-step process. The first step is to complete and submit this form to be selected as a state nominee. If the school is subsequently selected, the second step of the process is to provide additional information for the nominee package that will be forwarded to the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Each state may submit up to four nominees to ED. Upon review, ED will then award approximately 100 Green Ribbons from these nominees.

Application reviews will be based on the applicant's demonstrated progress towards the goals of each of the three ED-Green Ribbon Schools Pillars:

Pillar I goal: The school has a net zero environmental impact

Pillar II goal: The school has a positive impact on the health and performance of students and staff

Pillar III goal: 100% of the school's graduates are environmentally and sustainability literate

- 1. These are ambitious goals and few if any schools are expected to have achieved all three, or perhaps even 100% of any one of the pillars.**
- 2. Schools demonstrating exemplary achievement in all three Pillars will receive the highest ranking.**
- 3. It is important to demonstrate concrete achievement, using quantified measures, whenever possible**
- 4. If your school is being actively considered, additional documents supporting your answers may be requested.**

As you'll see in the application form below, the Illinois State Board of Education has broken down each Pillar into "Elements" in order to provide more detail and explanation for what is meant by each Pillar. Each Element then has a series of questions which will demonstrate the progress made in achieving these goals. Some questions have been grouped together into categories for the sake of clarity and organization.

Once you begin your application, you may save and return to it at any time.

You must submit your application no later than February 15, 2012.

2. Page Two

By submitting this electronic application, the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalents) on the next page certify, for public schools, that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct. For private schools, the signatures of the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalent) on the next page certify that statements 1 through 7 and statement 12 are true. *In no case, is a private school required to make any certification with regard to the public school district in which it is located.*

- The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
- The school achieves or comes close to achieving the goals of all three Green Ribbon Pillars: 1) environmental and sustainability education; 2) healthy school environments; and 3) environmental impact and energy efficiency.
- The school is in compliance with all applicable occupational safety and health standards and has no outstanding citations for violation of federal, state, or local occupational safety and health regulations and standards, nor has resolved such a case within the past year.
- The school is in compliance with all applicable federal food and drug standards, including the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and has no outstanding violations, nor has resolved such a case within the past year.
- The school is in compliance with all applicable state and local codes and has no outstanding citations for state or local environmental, health, existing building, fire, plumbing, mechanical, or property maintenance codes, laws, or regulations, nor has resolved such a case within the past year.
- The school has not been cited within the past three years for failure to meet federal, state or local potable water quality standards.
- The school has not been cited within the last three years for improper management of hazardous waste according to federal and state regulations.
- Neither the applicant nor its public school district is refusing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
- OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the public school district concluding that applicant or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective plan to remedy the violation.
- The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
- There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the public school or public school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or public school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
- The school and the district (if the school is a public school) meet applicable federal, state, tribal, and local health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations, and policy, and is willing to undergo U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on-site verification.

3. Page Three

School Contact Information

School Name

Prairie Crossing Charter School

Street Address

1531 Jones Point Road

City

Grayslake

State

IL

Zip

60030

School Website

<http://www.prairiecrossingcharterschool.org/>

Principal First Name

Nigel

Principal Last Name

Whittington, executive director

Principal Email Address

nwhittington@pccharterschool.org

Principal Phone Number

847-543-9722

Lead Applicant First Name (if different from principal)

Naomi

Lead Applicant Last Name (if different from principal)

Hershiser

Lead Applicant Email

nhershiser@pccharterschool.org

Lead Applicant Phone Number

847-543-9722

Level

K - 8

School Type

Charter

How would you describe your school?

Private/Independent

District and Code

34049900025

School Name

Prairie Crossing Charter School

Does your school have at least 40 percent of your students from a disadvantaged background?

No

4. Page Four

Application Outline:

<u>Green Ribbon Pillars and Elements</u>	<u>Points</u>
Cross-Cutting Questions: Participation in Green School Programs and/or Awards for Environmental and Sustainability Efforts	5 points
<u>PILLAR ONE: Net zero environmental impact: 30%</u>	
Element 1A: Zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions	15 points
Energy	
Buildings	
Element 1B: Improved water quality, efficiency, and conservation	5 points
Water	
Grounds	
Element 1C: Reduced waste production	5 points
Waste	
Hazardous waste	
Element 1D: Use of alternative transportation to, during, and from school	5 points
<u>PILLAR TWO: Positive impact on student and staff health: 30%</u>	
Element 2A: An integrated school environmental health program	15 points
Integrated Pest Management	
Contaminant controls and Ventilation	
Asthma control	
Indoor air quality	
Moisture control	
Chemical management	
Element 2B: High standards of nutrition, fitness, and quantity of quality outdoor time	15 points
Fitness and outdoor time	
Food and Nutrition	
Ultra Violet (UV) safety	
<u>PILLAR THREE: 100% of the school's graduates are environmentally and sustainability literate: 35%</u>	
Element 3A: Interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy and human systems	20 points
Element 3B: Use of the environment and sustainability to develop STEM content, knowledge, and thinking skills	5 points
Element 3C: Development and application of civic engagement knowledge and skills	10 points
TOTAL	100 points

5. Page Five

Q CC1: Is your school participating in a local, state, or nationally recognized green school program which asks you to benchmark progress in some fashion (for example, National Wildlife Federation Eco-Schools USA, Green Schools Alliance, Collaborative for High Performance Schools, or Project Learning Tree's Green Schools!)?

No

Which program(s) are you participating in and what level(s) have you achieved?

Q CC2: Has your school, staff or student body received any awards for environmental or sustainability stewardship/action?

Yes

Please list the awards you have received and the years you received them.

BP Leader Award, 2004; "Charter Up" award from the Illinois Network of Charter Schools for our innovative Farm to Table program, 2006; LEED Gold certification, 2008

6. Page Six

Pillar 1: Environmental Impact and Energy Efficiency

Buildings, grounds and operations goal: The school has made significant progress toward "net zero" environmental impact (zero carbon, solid waste, and hazardous waste footprints).

Pillar 1 includes four main elements:

A) Reduced greenhouse gas emissions, using an energy audit or emissions inventory and reduction plan, cost-effective energy efficiency improvements and on-site renewable energy and/or purchase of green power.

B) Improved water quality, efficiency, and conservation.

C) Reduced solid waste production, through increased recycling, reduced consumption, and improved management, reduction, or elimination of hazardous waste stream.

D) Expanded use of alternative transportation to, during and from school, through active promotion of locally-available options and implementation of enabling projects and policies.

Each question in this section is designed to measure your school's progress towards Pillar 1 and its associated 4 elements.

7. Page Seven

Q 1A1: Can your school demonstrate a reduction in its Greenhouse Gas emissions?

No

Please provide the following information:

Q 1A2: Has your school received EPA ENERGY STAR certification or does it meet the requirements for ENERGY STAR certification?

No

If your school received the certification, please note the year it was achieved and the score received:

Q 1A3: Has your school reduced its total non-transportation energy use from an initial baseline?

No

Please provide the following information:

Q 1A4: What percentage of your school's energy is obtained from:

On-site renewable energy generation : 23%

Purchased renewable energy : none intentionally

In what year was your school constructed?

1999-2006 (5 buildings)

What is the total building area of your school?

42,701 sq. ft. (33981 constructed within last 10 years, 8729 previously existing)

Q 1A5: Has your school constructed a new building or renovated an existing building in the past ten years?

Yes

Please provide the following information:

Percentage of the building area that meets green build standards (for example, LEED, CHPS, Green Globes or other standards)

: 72% of new construction

Which certification did you receive and at what level? : LEED Gold

What is the total constructed area? : Of new buildings, 13,711 sq. ft. LEED Gold certified; 10,960 sq. ft. qualifies for LEED certification but certification not applied for due to certification cost; 9,310 sq. ft. does not qualify.

What is the total renovated area? : 0 sq. ft.

Q 1A6: Do any parts of your existing buildings meet green build standards (for example, LEED, CHPS, Green Globes, or other standards)?

No

Please provide the following information:

Q 1A7: Does your school reduce and/or offset the greenhouse gas emissions from building energy use?

No

Please provide the following information:

Q 1A8: Please indicate which green building practices your school is using to ensure your building is energy efficient.

School has an energy and water efficient product purchasing and procurement policy in place

Other (please describe): School has geothermal heating and cooling system; school has wind turbine and solar panels. New buildings constructed with thick insulation and energy-efficient windows and window placement.

8. Page Eight

Q 1B1: Can you demonstrate a reduction in your school's total water consumption (measured in gallons/occupant) from an initial baseline?

No

Please provide the following information:

Q 1B2: Which of the following practices does your school employ to increase water efficiency and ensure quality? (Please check all that apply)

Our school conducts annual audits of the facility and irrigation systems to ensure they are free of significant water leaks and to

identify opportunities for savings.

Our school's landscaping is water-efficient and/or regionally appropriate.

Our school uses alternative water sources (ie. grey water) for irrigation before potable water.

Taps, faucets, and fountains at our school are cleaned at least twice annually to reduce contamination and screens and aerators are cleaned at least annually to remove particulate lead deposits.

Please provide the following information about your school's landscaping

What percentage of your total landscaping is considered water-efficient or regionally appropriate? : 90%

What types of plants are used and where are they located? : native prairie plants and trees are planted throughout the campus

Please describe the alternate water sources used for irrigation. (Maximum 100 words)

We have four 1000-gallon cisterns for collecting rainwater on our LEED certified classroom building. Other campus buildings have rain barrels for collecting rain water and watering food-garden areas. We do not rely upon tap water for landscaping needs at all.

Please describe the program you have in place to control lead in drinking water. (Maximum 100 words)

Q 1B3: Our school's drinking water comes from:

Municipal water source

Please describe how the water source is protected from potential contaminants. (Maximum 100 words)

Q 1B4: Please describe any additional progress your school has made towards improving water quality, efficiency, and conservation. (Maximum 200 words)

Our school has dual-flush toilets that use less water for liquid waste. All bathroom faucets are motion-censored auto-off faucets and sinks have low-flow/aerated faucets.

9. Page Nine

Q 1C1: What percentage of solid waste is diverted from landfilling or incinerating due to recycling and/or composting (i.e. Recycling Rate)?

A - Monthly garbage service in cubic yards (garbage dumpster size(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected). : 10 cubic yards

B - Monthly recycling volume in cubic yards (recycling dumpster sizes(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected). : 40 cubic yards

C - Monthly compostable materials volume(s) in cubic yards (food scrap/food soiled paper dumpster size(s) x number of collections per month x percentage full when emptied or collected). : 4 cubic yards

Recycling Rate = $(B + C) \div (A + B + C) \times 100$: 81.5%

Q 1C2: What percentage of your school's total office/classroom paper content by cost is post-consumer material or fiber from forests certified as responsibly managed by the Forest Stewardship Council, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, American Tree Farm System or other certification standard. (If a product is only 30% recycled, only 30% of the cost should be counted)

90%

Q 1C3: What percentage of the total office/classroom paper content by cost is totally chlorine-free (TCF) or processed chlorine free (PCF)

0%

Q 1C4: Please provide the following information about your school's hazardous waste

How much hazardous waste does your school produce (lbs/person/year)? : 0

How is the amount generated calculated? : we don't generate any hazardous waste

List the types of hazardous waste generated : none

Q 1C5: Which of the following benchmarks has your school achieved to minimize and safely manage hazardous waste?

(Please check all that apply)

Our school has a hazardous waste policy for storage, management, and disposal that is actively enforced.
Our school disposes of unwanted computer and electronic products through an approved recycling facility or program.

Which green cleaning standard is used?

Q 1C6: Does your school use "third party certified" green cleaning products?

Yes

Please provide the following information about the green cleaning products used in your school:

What percentage by volume of all cleaning products in use are "third party certified" green cleaning products? : 75%
What specific green cleaning product standard (Green Seal, Ecologo, etc.) does the school use? : Green Seal GS-37

Q 1C7: What other indicators do you have of your school's reduction of solid waste and elimination of hazardous waste?

(Maximum 200 words)

Every trash can in our school is matched up with a clearly labeled recycle bin. Bins are periodically monitored for "sorting errors." Each classroom/eating area has a compost bin; food waste, pet waste and other appropriate materials are composted. We have a trash-free lunch program for our students, and any school-provided lunches come in re-usable containers (only provided once per week). We have implemented monthly Green Challenges that involve contests to increase our re-use of items, our recycling, and to reduce our consumption in general (less used is less to dispose of!).

Q 1D1: What percentage of your students walk, bike, bus, or carpool (2 + student in the car) to/from school?

90%

How was this data collected and calculated? (Maximum 100 words)

Anecdotally and visual estimation: we have a carpool procedure that is monitored by staff so we see the students get into and out of cars; it is very rare to see students get out alone. The school helps match up carpools since we do not offer busing services. Many students walk or bike to and from school each day (about 25%); we can determine the percentage based on the number of students who are released to walk or bike home at the end of the day, as parents must inform the school office.

Q 1D2: Which of the following policies or programs has your school implemented:

Our school has designated carpool parking stalls.
Our school has established Safe Pedestrian Routes to school which are distributed to parents and posted in our office.

Q 1D3: Describe how your school transportation use is efficient and has reduced environmental impacts (e.g. the percentage of school-owned electric/hybrid/alternative fuel vehicles in your fleet, or other indicators of significant reductions in emissions):

Our school does not own buses or provide transportation. We own 1 pick-up truck for plowing snow -- this is our only vehicle.

Q 1D4: What percentage of the school grounds are devoted to ecologically beneficial uses (school vegetable garden, wildlife or native plant habitats, outdoor classroom, environmental restoration projects, rain garden, etc.) or socially/culturally beneficial uses (e.g., playgrounds, outdoor spaces designed and used regularly for social interaction, athletic or recreational areas, walking or running trails etc.)?

100%

Q 1D5: This is the end of Pillar 1. Please describe any other accomplishments or progress your school has made towards reducing/eliminating environmental impacts or improving your energy efficiency. (Maximum 200 words)

We do not have data to compare our performance to baseline data because our classroom buildings were built specifically to be energy and water efficient, and programs have been in place since they opened. We implement monthly environmental challenges that promote stewardship behaviors. We have set-back thermostats; all lights are CFLs or other low-energy options. All classrooms have daylight-enhancing windows to reduce need for light, and have options to turn on some (rather than all) of the lights. Lights are also on motion sensors so they go off when no one is using the classrooms or bathrooms. Our classroom buildings have thick insulation to reduce heating and cooling needs. We also have geothermal heating and cooling, mentioned previously, as well as a wind turbine and an array of solar panels. We are working to expand and add more

energy efficient features to our campus in the near future. In addition to 100% recycled office paper, we purchase recycled toilet paper and paper towels. Classes are encouraged to use cloth towels when safe to do so, and each classroom is equipped with reusable dishes and silverware so that no disposable/paper products are used during class meals or parties.

10. Page Ten

Pillar 2: Healthy School Environments

Healthy student and staff environment goal: The school improves the health and performance of students and staff.

Pillar 2 includes two main Elements:

A) An integrated school environmental health program based on an operations and facility-wide environmental management system that considers student and staff health and safety in all practices related to design, construction, renovation, operations, and maintenance of schools and grounds.

B) High standards of nutrition, fitness, and quantity of quality outdoor time for both students and staff.

Each question in this section is designed to measure your school's progress toward Pillar 2.

11. Page Eleven

Q2A1: Which of the following practices does your school employ with regards to pest management? (Please check all that apply)

Our school has an integrated pest management plan in place to reduce and/or eliminate pesticides.

Copies of pesticide labels, copies of notices, MSDS and annual summaries of pesticide applications are all available and in an accessible location.

Our school prohibits children from entering a treated area for at least 8 hours after the treatment or longer if required by the pesticide label.

Q2A2: Which of the following practices does your school employ to improve contaminant control and ventilation? (Please check all that apply)

Our school has a comprehensive indoor air quality management program that is consistent with Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Tools for Schools.

Our school meets ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2010 (Ventilation for acceptable indoor air quality).

Our school has eliminated mercury-containing thermometers, chemical compounds, art chemicals, etc. and elemental mercury.

Our school disposes of any unwanted mercury laboratory chemicals, thermometers and other devices in accordance with federal, state, and local environmental regulations.

Our school has CO alarms that meet the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association code 720.

There are no wood structures on school grounds that contain chromate copper arsenate.

Our school visually inspects all structures on a monthly basis to ensure they are free of mold, moisture, and water leakage.

Our school's indoor relative humidity is maintained below 60%.

Our school has moisture resistant materials/protective systems installed (ie. flooring, tub/shower, backing, and piping).

Our school has a chemical management program that includes: chemical purchasing policy (low or no-VOC products), storage and labeling, training and handling, hazard communication, spills (clean up and disposal), and selecting EPA's Design for the Environment approved cleaning products.

Our school prohibits smoking on campus and in public school buses.

If your school has combustion appliances, is there an inventory of them and are they annually inspected to ensure they are not releasing Carbon Monoxide? (yes/no/no combustion appliances): no -- water heaters not inspected annually

What percentage of all classrooms with radon levels greater than 4 pCi/L have been mitigated in conformance with ASTM E2121?: no dangerous radon levels detected.

Q2B1: Which practices does your school employ to promote nutrition, physical activity and overall school health? (Please check all that apply)

- Our school participates in a Farm to School program or other program to utilize local food in our cafeteria.
- Our school has an onsite food garden.
- Our students spend an average of at least 120 minutes per week (over the past year) in school supervised physical education.
- At least 50% of our students' annual physical education takes place outdoors.

Please list your school's USDA HealthierUS School Challenge award level or describe other nutrition program. (Maximum 100 words)

Please describe the type of outdoor exercise opportunities and nature-based recreation available to students. (Maximum 200 words)

Students participate in P.E., which is outdoors when weather permits. Every student has recess 1-2 times per day, outdoors unless there is lightning or below zero temperatures. Classes go outside to work in their gardens or at our local farm except during winter; classes are encouraged to go outside on a daily basis for learning opportunities, which often involve walking or other physical activity. We do not provide a school lunch except for a monthly farm-to-table program, and a weekly pizza lunch, which is provided by Organic Life and includes fresh fruits and vegetables, locally sourced when available. Organic Life is the leading provider of healthy school lunches in Illinois. Each Farm to Table lunch features a variety of produce planted, grown, and harvested by our students, from kale to wheat to beans. The students then participate in a meal created by parent volunteers, and present to their peers about their crop at the lunches. This meal, accompanied by experiential learning, makes an impact far beyond the lunch table. Students bring home their knowledge and experience of growing and eating new, healthy foods, and can make a significant impact on their own family's purchasing and eating behavior.

Q2B2: What percentage (by cost) of food purchased by your school is certified as "environmentally preferable" (e.g. Organic, FairTrade, Food Alliance, Rainforest Alliance, etc.)?

90% (but we do not provide lunch for our students)

Q2B3: This is the end of Pillar 2. Please describe any additional progress your school has made in terms of the school's built and natural environment (including unique community and/or business partnerships) to promote overall student and staff health and safety. (Maximum 200 words)

We have a partnership with a local farm; students work at the farm and learn about farming practices and health issues. We have outdoor classrooms (areas in the prairie and near the pond equipped with benches and materials for learning) and are currently in the process of converting our playground to an all-natural play and learning area and installing an outdoor fire ring. We are developing a number of partnerships with local and national businesses in order to fund and develop these innovative spaces. We have purchased a greenhouse to be installed on-site this March. Our LEED building/campus features make a significant and positive impact on student health. Research demonstrates that natural lighting and green building technologies that aspire to improve the indoor air quality enhance productivity and student achievement, while simultaneously improving student health. Native landscaping results in less pesticide usage.

Pillar 3: Environmental and Sustainability Education

Student achievement goal: 100% of the school's graduates are environmentally and sustainability literate.

Pillar 3 includes three main Elements:

- 1) Interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy and human systems.**
- 2) Use of the environment and sustainability to develop STEM content knowledge and thinking skills to**

prepare graduates for the 21st century technology-driven economy.

3) Development of civic engagement knowledge and skills, and students' application of these to address sustainability and environmental issues in their community.

Each question in this section is designed to measure your school's progress toward Pillar 3.

14. Page Fourteen

Q3A1: Which practices does your school employ to help insure the environmental and sustainability literacy of your graduates? (Please check all that apply)

Our school has an environmental or sustainability literacy graduation requirement

Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated throughout the curriculum.

Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated into classroom based and schoolwide assessments.

Professional development opportunities in environmental and sustainability education are provided for all teachers.

Please describe your school's environmental or sustainability literacy graduation requirement. (Maximum 200 words)

We have developed an environmental literacy scope and sequence, and assured that each topic is covered. In addition, our students complete an environmental culminating project, where they spend an entire year immersed in an environmental issue. They complete significant service hours related to the issue, as well as research/presentations about the issue, in which a major requirement is relating their issue to major environmental concepts (the flow of energy, cycling of materials, change over time, interrelationships, human impacts on the environment, etc.). We are developing a student ambassadors program in which students in each grade from Kindergarten through 8th grade will study the different sustainable features of our campus. Each grade level will focus on learning about one or more different campus features, and the students will present their newly acquired knowledge to their teachers, students, and parents. This will in turn educate all of our parents about the sustainable campus features and how they could be incorporated in other venues. By the time our students reach the 8th grade, they will be knowledgeable about all of the sustainable campus features and will act as student ambassadors, able to conduct tours and educate visitors about the benefits.

Please describe your classroom based or schoolwide assessments in environmental and sustainability concepts and include what percentage of students scored "proficient" or better. (Maximum 200 words)

We are just starting to implement an environmental portfolio requirement at each grade level, where students will be keeping selected environmentally relevant materials from kindergarten through 8th grade to monitor and assess progress and knowledge. Being a new program, we do not have data on students scores. Students will also be taking a test at the end of their sustainability unit (in March), scores unavailable. Students complete their environmental culminating project, which is designed as an authentic assessment of their environmental knowledge, attitudes, and civic engagement skills and attitudes. All students pass this (score proficiently), as it is a graduation requirement. Many other classroom-based assessments are in use because our curriculum is focused on the environment, but these are individualized by teacher.

Please describe professional development opportunities available in environmental and sustainability standards. Include the percentage of teachers who participated in these opportunities over the past 2 years. (Maximum 200 words)

Our staff in-service days involve environmental education components. All teachers participate in these. (We have an entire day devoted to planning integrated environmental units, with a speaker and coaches scheduled to come. Previously this year, we had professional development on classroom gardens, using our LEED certified building as a learning classroom, and nature journaling.) Our school has an environmental education specialist on staff that works with all teachers and classrooms, but especially with new teachers to help them feel comfortable teaching in and about the environment. Two teachers (10%) attended the Green Schools conference last year, and attended NAAEE conference 2 years ago. 6 teachers (30%) attended a workshop about creating and using outdoor learning areas. 2 teachers (10%) attended the Chicago Wilderness WildOnes conference; 3 teachers (15%) attended the Chicago Wilderness annual conference. We provide in-house opportunities for the teachers who attend these conferences to bring their new knowledge and skills back to our campus and share them with their colleagues.

Q3A2: If your school serves grades 9-12, please provide the following information:

Q3B1: Do your school's science courses frequently use sustainability and the environment as a context for learning

science (such as asking questions, developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, using mathematics and computational thinking, constructing explanations, and engaging in argument from evidence when exploring environmental and sustainability issues)?

Yes

Please describe. (Maximum 200 words)

Our curriculum involves integrated environmental units at every grade level. These units are largely project-based, so students are collecting and monitoring data, researching issues that are important to them, and making connections between disciplines. We employ a constructivist or inquiry approach when possible. In addition, our students engage in age-appropriate environmental service learning projects from kindergarten through 8th grade. One example of such is a project in which our fifth graders are currently engaged. Their goal is to create custom-designed and hand-painted kitchen compost buckets for sale. Any profits from the sale of these buckets is assigned to the school's composting program. The students incorporate this project into their curriculum in a number of ways: • They learn mathematics by calculating the volume of materials they are keeping out of landfills. • They study science by delving into how the composting process works to break down organic materials into valuable matter and creating different recipes for compost depending on how their customers want to use it. • They create informative and convincing sales brochures and flyers to publicize their products. • They learn economics by studying supply and demand and determining how much to charge in order to make a profit.

Q3B2: If your school is a high school, does your school curriculum make connections between classroom and college and career readiness, in particular post-secondary options in environmental and sustainability fields (for example, CTE Green Sustainable Design and Technology course)?

Please describe these college and career connections. (Maximum 200 words)

Q3C1: Do students conduct an age-appropriate, self-selected, civic/community engagement project at every grade level?

Yes

If not in all grades, please specify which grades.

What percentage of last year's graduates scored proficient or better on a community or civic engagement skills assessment?

100% students passed their culminating environmental service learning project (it is a graduation requirement)

Please provide the following information:

What percentage of these projects focus on environmental or sustainability topics? : 100%

What percentage of students completed such a project last year? : 100%

Q3C2: Do students have meaningful outdoor learning experiences (experiences that engage students in critical thinking, problem solving and decision making) at every grade level?

Yes

If not in all grades, please specify which grades.

Please share how outdoor learning is used to teach an array of subjects in contexts, engage the broader community, and develop civic skills. (Maximum 200 words)

Our teachers are encouraged to teach using the outdoors as a classroom whenever it makes sense in the curriculum. Students engage in phenology data collections, which hones observation, drawing, writing, measuring and data collection skills, as well as communication skills. Students in 1-8th grade keep nature journals, and use these in their writing curriculum. Students are all involved in environmental service learning projects that encourage stewardship behaviors. For example, students work with adult community volunteers to restore a prairie across the street from our school; students promote rain barrel use, educate the public about the benefits, and construct and sell rain barrels, and students have become involved in a campaign to help get the NCU bill passed in congress. One example is our 3rd/4th grade Lewis and Clark unit. The students travel to a local homestead in the middle of winter in order to participate firsthand in the types of challenges and adventures Lewis and Clark faced. They build their own shelters, learn how to start a fire by hand, and cook over the fire they have created. The students remember this unit and gain a great deal of knowledge and pride from their hands-on participation.

Q 3C4: Please describe your partnerships with the local community (e.g., academic, business, government, nonprofit and informal science institutions) to help advance your school, other schools (especially schools with fewer resources) and the greater community toward the 3 Pillars. Include both the scope and impact of these partnerships. (Maximum 300 words)

We have a previously-described partnership with the Prairie Crossing Farm. We are also in the process of developing a joint summer teacher institute (for outside teachers) with the Farm. We work in partnership with our local community college (College of Lake County), where college students come to work with our students on local food preparation and preservation. We are also developing partnerships with the college related to our sustainable landscaping and their horticulture department, and through their LEED certification program. We are developing a partnership with National Louis University to work with their pre-service teachers on environmental education and integrated environmental units. Our goal is to create an opportunity for pre-service teachers to complete an in-service program on our campus, where they can be mentored by our teachers, who are educated in environmental education. This will result in more new teachers, having education and experience in integrated environmental education. This will allow them to bring their new skills wherever they work, expanding the impact and bringing environmental education into new schools. We work with local nonprofit conservation agencies such as the Liberty Prairie Conservancy so our students can participate in restoration activities and other volunteer activities. We have a partnership with Waste Management to present an award annually to the students whose culminating project makes the biggest impact on the environment. We also partner with many other local businesses and government agencies, in attempts to educate them about environmental impact and encourage them to make sustainably choices. Our students frequently travel to other schools to teach environmental lessons to younger students, including both lessons about the benefits of environmental behaviors like recycling, and teaching about ecological concepts. Our students have traveled to Chicago schools, Waukegan schools, and Gurnee schools, among others, to teach their peers.

Q 3C5: This is the end of Pillar 3. Please describe other methods and measurements your school uses to ensure matriculating students are environmentally and sustainability literate. (Maximum 200 words)

Our school's curriculum is centered around the environment, and we make a concerted effort to integrate environmental studies and issues with all of our classroom curricula areas. This is the basis of our charter, and we try to include it in students' lives every day. We work with all teachers to make sure that all students are developing a sense of place, stewardship behaviors, and ecological literacy. Through teacher professional development and evaluation, we ensure that the environment is a priority in all of our classrooms. Through 9 years, our students demonstrate emotional connections to the natural world and develop meaningful understandings of ecological processes and human effects thereon. They learn stewardship and empowerment skills that will make them become active and engaged citizens who have the knowledge and the desire to affect positive change in their communities.

15. Page Fifteen

This concludes your Green Ribbon Schools Application. Please take a moment to make sure you've answered every question to the best of your ability. Once you proceed past this page, your application is considered submitted and will not be available for further editing.

16. Page Sixteen

Thank you for submitting an application to Illinois Green Ribbon Schools.

Your application will be reviewed along with all completed applications following the application deadline of February 15, 2012.

If you have any questions, please contact Illinois' Green Ribbon Schools program coordinator, Ann Muraro-Lacopo.

Email Confirmation

Feb 14, 2012 15:43:01 Success: Email Sent to: nhershiser@pocharterschool.org

17. Thank You!

Thank you for submitting your school's Green Ribbon application. We appreciate your participation in this program.



PENDING OMB APPROVAL

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

School and District's Certifications

The signatures of the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalents) on the next page certify, for public schools, that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct. For private schools, the signatures of the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalent) on the next page certify that statements 1 through 3 and statement 8 are true.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school achieves or comes close to achieving the goals of all three green Ribbon Pillars: 1) environmental impact and energy efficiency; 2) healthy school environments; and 3) environmental and sustainability education.
3. The school has been evaluated and selected from among schools within the state or Nominating Authority's jurisdiction (BIE, DoDEA), based on *quantified achievement* toward the three Green School Pillars and Elements.
4. Neither the nominated public school nor its public school district is refusing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review.
5. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the public school district concluding that the nominated public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
6. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
7. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the public school or public school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or public school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
8. The school and, in the case of a public school, the public school district, meet applicable federal, state, tribal and local health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and are willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

PENDING OMB APPROVAL

U.S. Department of Education
2012 Green Ribbon Schools

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) Charter Title I Magnet Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Gail Worrell
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Prairie Crossing Charter School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1531 Jones Point Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Grayslake State IL Zip 60030

County Lake State School Code Number* 340499000

Telephone (847) 543-9722 Fax (847) 543-9744

Web site/URL www.prairiecrossingcharter-school.org E-mail nhershiser@pccharterschool.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the award and eligibility requirements on page 2-4, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Dr. Gail L. Worrell Date 3/13/12
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Nigel Whittington, executive director
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name* Prairie Crossing Charter School Dist. ⁹⁰⁰ Tel. (847) 543-9722

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the award and eligibility requirements on page 2-4, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate. I concur that this is one of the highest performing green school applicants in our state.

Nigel Whittington Date 3/13/2012
(Superintendent's Signature)

*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space. In no case, is a private school required to make any certification with regard to the public school district in which it is located.

PART II – SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Instructions to School Principal

Provide a concise and coherent "snapshot" that describes how your school is representative of your state's highest achieving green school efforts in approximately 600-800 words. Summarize your strengths and accomplishments. Focus on what makes your school worthy of the title U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School. Be sure to note if students were actively involved in preparing the application.

This summary should be written as a stand-alone document. It will provide the ED review panel with an overview of the school's green activities that were detailed in the application to the state, DoDEA or BIE evaluators. If the school is awarded a Green Ribbon, this information may be shared with other schools, candidates for next year, the press, and the public.

PART III – DOCUMENTATION OF STATE EVALUATION OF NOMINEE

Instructions to Nominating Authority

For the pilot year, the Nominating Authority must review nominated schools for high achievement based on the schools' *quantified achievement*⁶ toward reaching the goals of each of the three Green School Pillars and elements.⁷

For each school being nominated by the Authority to ED, please attach state (or equivalent) evaluation materials (application) based on the Nominating Authority Evaluation Support Framework provided by ED to facilitate your evaluation of schools.

The Nominating Authority must review and sign the following certification for each school being nominated to ED.

Nominating Authority's Certifications

The signature by the Nominating Authority (the CSSO, DoDEA or BIE) on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire

⁶ The quantified assessment should be based on the common metrics provided in state level evaluator guidance.

⁷ In future years, evaluators will be required to review the school community's comprehensive *green school plan* that incorporates, at a minimum, the plan elements listed under "The Three Pillars and Elements," and a *baseline assessment* for each of the elements of the plan; however, this documentation is not a requirement in the pilot year.

PENDING OMB APPROVAL

school.)

- ✓2. The school achieves or is one of those overseen by the Nominating Authority which comes the closest to achieving the goals of all three green Ribbon Pillars:
 - 1) environmental impact and energy efficiency; 2) healthy school environments; and
 - 3) environmental and sustainability education.
- ✓3. The Nominating Authority has evaluated the school and selected it for submission to the U.S. Department of Education from among those schools overseen by the Nominating Authority which have applied for a Green Ribbon, based on *quantified achievement* toward the three Green School Pillars and Elements.
- ✓4. The school and the district meet applicable federal civil rights and federal, state, tribal and local health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and are willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency Illinois State Board of Education

Name of Nominating Authority Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the award and eligibility requirements on pages 2-4, and certify, to the best of my knowledge through a documentary verification assessment, that the school meets the provisions in this Part of the Nominee Presentation Form.

Christopher A. Koch Date 3/19/12
(Nominating Authority's Signature)

Note to Nominating Authority: The application, including the signed certifications should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Director, ED-Green Ribbon Schools at green.ribbon.schools@ed.gov, or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Andrea Suarez Falken, Director, Green Ribbon Schools, Office of Communications and Outreach, 5E227, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

Prairie Crossing Charter School Summary of Achievements

Prairie Crossing Charter School (PCCS) is a public school that transforms our children through academic discovery and interaction with our unique natural, ecological, and community resources. Our Values include:

- **Environmental Stewardship:** We respect the Earth and conserve, protect and restore the natural environment.
- **Ecological Understanding:** We believe the natural environment provides a fertile ground for creativity, wonder, inquiry and integrated learning across academic disciplines.

We strive to nurture a generation of youth who can lead us toward a future in which caring for our earth is innate and essential. We achieve this through: (1) our focus on reducing environmental impact and increasing energy efficiency, while actively engaging students in learning, living, and teaching about these critical issues; (2) our care for the environmental, physical, and socio-emotional health of our students; and (3) our integrated environmental curriculum that breaks down traditional barriers between subjects and makes learning more meaningful to students.

PCCS' campus features the first LEED certified school building in Illinois. From conception to construction, we created the school's campus to reflect our mission and values and demonstrate green technologies. We were proud to achieve a LEED Gold rating by the USGBC. The campus features local, renewable, and recycled materials, native landscaping, a geothermal heating and cooling system, natural ventilation and lighting, solar panels, wind turbine, rain cisterns, rain barrels, indirect and direct fluorescent lighting, dual flush toilets, sensor-controlled sinks, and more.

Each environmental feature of PCCS' campus serves as a teaching/learning tool. We launched a Green Ambassador Program to ensure that students understand the green features of the campus, making the campus a sustainability classroom. This program also gives students an active role in promoting and communicating about the school by serving as tour guides and presenting the campus' environmental features to visitors.

Our monthly Green Challenges ensure that our students learn about integral environmental issues and practice sustainable behaviors at school and home. Topics this school year include: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle; Trash Free Lunches; Composting; Donate, Don't Toss; Paper Reduction; Use Less Electricity; Water Conservation and Leave No Child Inside. The classrooms receive activities and resources for each month's environmental theme, and engage in auditing and behavior monitoring. Classrooms then set measurable goals for improving their performance over time. Through these types of hands-on programs, our students become environmental stewards in their homes, families, and neighborhoods. PCCS hopes to empower them to reflect the lessons they have learned outwards, lighting the way for others to learn, engage, and improve.

At PCCS, we believe that children learn through dynamic engagement in the natural world. Our students spend time in active play outdoors every day except in severe weather conditions. In addition to daily recess for all students, we utilize the outdoors as a classroom. As part of our integrated environmental curriculum, students in all classes participate in field studies, take nature walks, plant, maintain, and harvest classroom gardens, build natural dens, participate in solo spots and phenological observations, visit the Learning Farm, and more. Students develop a strong sense of place through these activities.

In classroom gardens and at the Learning Farm, PCCS students actively participate in every stage of growing organic crops, from planting, caring for and harvesting plants to preparing them for consumption. This hands-on, outdoor education incorporates our constructivist and integrated approach to learning. While growing food, students learn about the history and economics of agriculture, mathematics concepts through the measurement of plants and compost materials, writing and reading through relevant research and reflection, and earth science through the study of soil quality and the transformation of energy in living things. PCCS students then have the opportunity to participate in a freshly prepared monthly Farm to Table lunch, featuring crops grown by students. This meal, accompanied by experiential learning, makes an impact far beyond the lunch table. Students bring home their knowledge and experience of growing and eating new, healthy foods, and can make a significant impact on their family's purchasing and eating behavior.

As a charter school, we believe in reaching beyond our campus, and our commitment to service learning helps us achieve that goal. Every grade at PCCS participates in extensive Service Learning Projects, concluding with our 7th/8th grade Culminating Projects. These projects seek to engage students in exploring the questions:

- How are you going to better the world in which you live?
- What are you going to do to positively impact the environment and your community?

Prairie Crossing Charter School does that by seeking out opportunities for collaboration in our community and beyond. We hope to serve as a model, and to be a passionate and committed partner for schools and organizations looking to improve their environmental impact, connect youth to the natural world, and give them the motivation, education, and resources necessary to protect it.

MURARO ANN

Subject: FW: Green Ribbon Schools

From: McQuillen, Deirdre [<mailto:Deirdre.McQuillen@Illinois.gov>]
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2012 8:37 AM
To: MURARO ANN
Subject: Green Ribbon Schools

Ann-

Sorry, this took so long to get back to you. All three of our Bureaus checked their records and we have no violations pending against any of the 3 finalist schools.

If you need anything else just let me know.

Thanks.

Deirdre McQuillen
Illinois EPA/Partners for Clean Air
Outreach Coordinator
phone: 217-558-0073
fax: 217-785-8346

